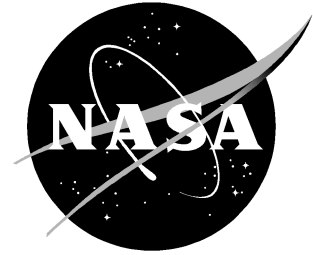


NewsRelease



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NOTE TO EDITORS:

NASA LANGLEY KEY CONTRIBUTOR TO SHUTTLE RETURN TO FLIGHT EFFORT

Researchers at NASA Langley Research Center, in Hampton, Va., have dedicated more than a year and a half to help determine the causes that led to the loss of the Shuttle Columbia and its crew.

A key player in the agency's Return to Flight effort, Langley is conducting extensive research in the critical areas of external tank foam analysis, on-orbit repair methods, materials evaluation and the repair-induced aerodynamic and aerothermodynamic flow effects on the orbiter. Langley is also testing the next generation of Shuttle tires.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY: At 9:00 a.m., Thursday, September 16, members of the media will have a special opportunity to visit NASA Langley laboratories, wind tunnels and other test sites to witness on-going testing and demonstrations in support of Return to Flight activities. An overview of Langley's research efforts will be presented by the Return to Flight Project Manager. Researchers will be available for interviews. To participate, call Bill Uher at 757-864-3189 (office) or 757-344-6811 (mobile) to arrange for credentials and entry to the Center.

The goal of Return to Flight is to resume Shuttle missions as soon as it is safely possible and to resume service to the International Space Station. The first flight is tentatively scheduled for spring 2005. Long-term research and improvements will continue to be developed and implemented as Shuttle flights continue.

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